



Michael Bidlo's "Guernica," 1984.

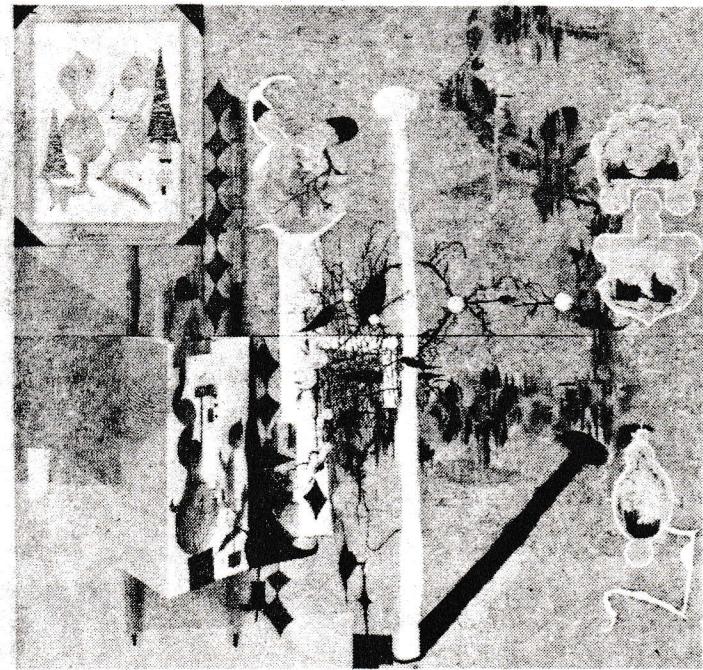
Michael Bidlo at the Larry Gagosian Gallery

There is a painting for sale at Larry Gagosian Gallery. It's called *Guernica*. Now, Picasso's *Guernica*, a long-time favorite at New York's Museum of Modern Art, is back in Spain, and the *Guernica* at Gagosian's is a copy by Michael Bidlo. This artist was last seen here in his gallery's show of East Village artists. He authored the Jackson Pollock. He is also responsible for the Duchamp, the Chagall, the Stella, and the Warhol on view in Trumps Restaurant for the next few months.

This practice of copying masterpieces has a certain legacy in contemporary art, beginning with Andy Warhol and most recently in the work of Sherrie

Levine. Perhaps it is this very legacy that makes Bidlo's work so hard to accept; you have to have been completely won over by a series of intellectual arguments against the exclusivity of art, against the possibility of making new or unique works of art in the "age of mechanical reproduction." These days, rock & roll parodies its forebears, literature cannibalizes and appropriates the past, and most art is about art. Perhaps Bidlo has just taken the whole thing to the next logical — or rather, the next absurd — step. And maybe I'm growing conservative in my old age, but it sounds like a hoax to me. Bidlo's intentions may be "interesting," but I'm not sure I care. (Larry Gagosian Gallery, 510 N. Robertson Blvd., through November 4.)

—Hunter Drohojowska



Lari Pittman, Birthplace, 1984.

Douglas M. Parker

Lari Pittman at the Rosamund Felsen Gallery

Lari Pittman's art is a collision between Elsie de Wolfe and the rise and fall of Western civilization. In the past, Pittman used his fancy motifs, zig-zaggy patterns, gold leaf and pseudo-organic designs to comment upon the iconography of interior decoration. His paintings looked surprisingly like something you might find in the ladies' room at Perino's or maybe Du Par's.

In his current exhibition, Pittman has exaggerated the complexity of his compositions and motifs so they work in service of a subject. The tableaux-paintings are composed of particle board with bizarre phallic additions and vignettes of

a world without progress, where nature rules. Almond-eyed, open-mouthed embryonic creatures copulate to create new life in a garden of Eden, but the creatures become the human race and problems ensue: history, nationalism, religion, monarchy, superiority . . . the creatures are destined to destroy themselves. The scenario is familiar to us, and is underscored by the ultra-familiar popular design motifs that deliver the message.

Pittman employs the products of civilization to tell the tale of its undoing. The paintings are well-executed and very smart, and this show represents the swift maturation of a young artist. (Rosamund Felsen Gallery, 669 N. La Cienega Blvd., closes today, October 27.)

—Hunter Drohojowska